Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs

*252. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sixteen member Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs, headed by the Minister of External Affairs, has met only once a year since 2005;

(b) if so, the issues pertaining to the Dalit Community that remain on the agenda of the last three years; and

(c) what steps have been taken so far, to implement these vital issues?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) The Cabinet Secretariat *vide* their Memo dated the 24th February, 2005 constituted Committee of Ministers on Dalit Affairs (CMDA). So far three meetings of the Committee have been held.

(b) to (c) The CMDA is required to oversee in a consolidated manner the effective pooling together and implementation of different programmes/schemes under various Ministries/Departments that relate to welfare and development of Dalits. The Committee is also required to identify the gaps in the existing schemes and help develop new programmes for eliminating the gaps and make recommendations on, devise strategies/ programmes for and monitor all items listed in the remit of the Committee. The remit of the Committee covers wide range of issues. Accordingly, to give focused attention on different aspects of welfare and development of Scheduled Castes in a comprehensive manner, the Committee constituted Six Sub-Groups to give their recommendations on the relevant items in consultation with other Ministries/Departments. The Sub-Groups have sumitted their reports.

Vacant seats in scientific and technological institutions

*253. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many seats in scientific and technological institutions have remained vacant throughout the academic year, due to lack of eligible candidates;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, institution-wise; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to fill up such vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) Some seats do remain vacant in some technical education institutions.

(b) Information is being collected.

(c) Schemes are being implemented to provide assistance for SC/ST students to undergo coaching for entrance examinations for admission to technical education institutions.